

Behavioral Health Resources For Schools

Opioid Misuse and the State Targeted Response (STR) to Opioid Addiction

While the misuse of prescription opioids and the use of heroin have reached epidemic proportions in other areas of the United States, Nebraska is not experiencing the same crisis that other states are with these drugs. This places Nebraska in a position to focus on prevention and workforce capacity to safeguard against a significant increase in opioid use disorders, opioid overdoses, and opioid-related deaths. **Schools provide an important link in these prevention efforts.**

All adolescents are at risk for misusing opioids though there are a wide range of factors that can either increase the risk of prescription drug misuse or help protect against it.¹

Risk Factors

- Acute and chronic pain,
- Physical health problems or a history of mental illness (such as depression).
- Other substance use or misuse.
- Youth who have witnessed a family member overdose, or
- Have a large number of friends who misuse prescription drugs.



Nearly half of adolescents ages 12 to 17 who reported misusing pain relievers said they were given or bought them from a friend or relative.

Protective Factors

Individuals at lower risk include those who:

- Commit to doing well in school and finishing school.
- Those who are concerned about the dangers of prescription drugs.
- Have a strong bond with their parent and whose parents express disapproval of substance use have a lower risk of misuse.

¹ HHS.Gov/Office of Adolescent Health

What is the role of schools?²

- School leaders, teachers and staff can create safe environments and positive cultures for students.
- Schools can educate students and families about the dangers of drug use and about how to prevent opioid misuse and addiction.
- Many evidence-based prevention programs can be delivered in a school setting.
- Schools can help to mitigate risk factors that can make students vulnerable to engaging in dangerous behavior.
- Schools can also boost protective factors and increase student engagement.
- Schools can be prepared if an opioid overdose occurs on school grounds.
- Schools and school districts can support students in recovery and students whose family members are suffering from addiction.



Resources²

- [Opioids.gov](https://www.opioids.gov) illustrates the magnitude of the opioid crisis and actions the Trump Administration is taking to address it.
- Data on youth drug use is available at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Opioid page.
- CDC's opioid overdose page provides comprehensive information about opioids and their risks, as well as information about how to protect against opioid misuse, addiction and overdose.

Contact the applicable Regional Behavioral Health Authority, if interested in learning more about prevention and treatment efforts in your area.

Region 1	(308) 635-3173	http://region1bhs.net/	Region 4	(402) 370-3100	www.region4bhs.org/
Region 2	(308) 534-0440	www.r2hs.com/	Region 5	(402) 441-4343	www.region5systems.net
Region 3	(308) 237-5113	www.Region3.net	Region 6	(402) 444-6573	www.Regionsix.com

² U.S. Department of Education